

9-11-2002

The Semi (09-11-2002)

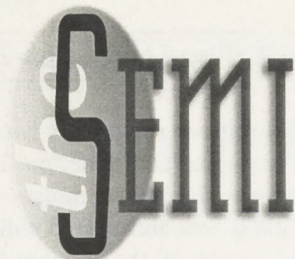
Fuller Theological Seminary

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fts-semi-6>

Recommended Citation

Fuller Theological Seminary, "The Semi (09-11-2002)" (2002). *The SEMI (2001-2010)*. 56.
<https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fts-semi-6/56>

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by the Fuller Seminary Publications at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in The SEMI (2001-2010) by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.



In This Issue

Back at the Taliban Recruiting Center, by Dudley Woodberry - p. 3

Just Peacemaking in a Post-Sept. 11 World, by Glen Stassen - p. 5

In the Shadow of 9/11, an Interview with Stephen Sesi - p. 6

Poetry by Rick Bonn - p. 5

Photography by Jeff Bjorck - pgs. 2, 4, 5

the SEMI - September 11 Issue - Fuller Theological Seminary - www.fuller.edu/student_life/SEMI/semi.html

Living with Sept. 11

Editor's Note

During a recent conversation, SWM chaplain Josephine Sesi commented to me that people in her native Kenya "live with past events," with the history of their communities absorbed into their beings and reflected in their lives. Past events are not so warmly received in the US. We tend to push history aside, perhaps because we have never learned how to live with its obligation. But our attitude seems to have changed after Sept. 11, and we appear to have welcomed the tragedy into our collective memory.

I wonder, however, if we understand what it means to "live with past events." Do we recognize that matured memories, no longer tender with recent pain, may refuse to limit themselves to simply comforting us or justifying present actions and may instead make painful demands? On the first anniversary of 9/11, the year-old events summon us to more than safe remembrance. Sept. 11 lives with us, and we are accountable for its lessons.

This special issue of the SEMI acknowledges 9/11 as a vital piece of our history. It is my hope that the issue reflects a community beginning to explore how a powerful living memory might contribute to the challenges and choices of the present day.



A God who Sits on Planes

by Jennifer Kemp

The pile of magazines, a small mountain of pictures and words detailing the horror of Tuesday, Sept. 11, remains undisturbed. I bought them on the way to a memorial service thinking that someday I might want to read through them—just in case I forgot. Right!

I remember Orientation Week last year, when I came across a student reading aloud an account of the demise of a flight attendant. It infuriated me. I was angry at the harsh reality of Sept. 11 and at him for not "getting it." My friend Karleton was killed on Flight #11.

I was angry at the harsh reality of Sept. 11 and at him for not "getting it." My friend Karleton was killed on flight #11.

Only five weeks earlier, my close friend, Haven, her husband, Karleton, and I sat together during a wedding reception. Before the festivities had concluded, Karleton excused himself from the table to play with his two year-old son. I remember watching him leave and telling Haven how fortunate she was to have a husband like Karleton and

continued on page 2

An Immigrant's Perspective on 9/11

by Grace Wong

Crystal clear days, low-flying airplanes, and emergency vehicles racing toward Manhattan evoke anxiety even a year after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. For me, a New Yorker and Lower Manhattan resident, the events of that day were not only horrific but also very personal. My neighborhood remained a "police state" for months, barricaded and guarded by state troopers. Makeshift memorials dotted the streets, especially around a nearby firehouse that lost nine men. I'll never forget one fireman who helped me put a baby bird back in its nest. His picture, enshrouded in black bunting, remains posted on the firehouse wall.

Aside from emotional trauma and grief, Sept. 11 caused many practical inconveniences. Means of transportation were closed or rerouted. Favorite stores and restaurants were destroyed or forced out of business. Living "normal" life

continued on page 4

God on Planes - continued from page 1

what a joy it was to watch the two of them together...Did he have any single brothers? Little did I know that a few short weeks later, I would board a plane to Boston to re-join my community there and say good-bye to a friend whose life infectiousy bettered the lives of those around him.

"We will not forget" is a phrase I heard numerous times during Karleton's memorial service and many times on the news and in our own community at Fuller. In the weeks following Sept. 11 we prayed and showed our support for families and our country. We wrote letters of sympathy while glued to the television for details of families torn apart. In class, we tried to make sense out of a senseless tragedy. We looked for God in the midst of darkness and chaos. I was amazed by the depth of concern and care demonstrated by the international students who grieved with us. For a brief moment, I felt a sense of connectedness both with the Fuller community and with the US—a nation tattered with a history of separation and individualism. Circumstances of shared loss and communal necessity brought us together.

I recently visited Boston again. What I experienced there amazed me. The difference in the city brought about by Sept. 11 is palpable. Although people have readjusted to everyday life, one sees reminders of the tragedy everywhere, from a memorial kiosk plastered with letters from kids and adults, to quilts reminding people that God was with those who died that day just as he was and is with those who live on. And people's behavior toward one another seemed more patient and gracious—even on the subway! "We will not forget" has meant something different for Bostonians than for those of us who live farther away.

For most of us, questions about where God was that day or about the horror of evil soon faded into the background of 'back to normal'. (I imagine our Israeli and Palestinian sisters and brothers know all too well what it's like to go 'back to normal' after tragedy strikes.) I doubt I am alone when I wish I could pretend that day never happened or—better yet—wish away the evil that has manifested itself throughout the world for centuries. But the reality is that, on this side of heaven, we will see the face of evil everyday—in ourselves, in our churches, in our country, in our world. Hard as we may try, we cannot imagine away evil—and Christians everywhere cannot afford to forget that it exists.

Neither can we imagine away or forget the truth of a God who sits on planes, walks in tall office buildings, and faces evil with a confidence that resurrects life from death. I would never have articulated this truth a year ago (nor could I stomach people who jumped to the 'bright side' those first few weeks) because my eyes and heart were intertwined with the pain of loss. I needed time to lay hold of Jesus' promise to comfort those who mourn. And in the process, the God of Abraham, the God of all Creation, has invited me *again and again* to remember and to believe that *I AM*.

The first year has passed. I would not suggest we live in constant mourning for what has come and gone, but I believe that we are called to remember God in our midst—as God was on Sept. 11 and as God is now and as God will be—and to actively enter the world of those whose experience is different or removed from ours, to see God's face and footprints there.

Jennifer Kemp, who walked for her M.Div. in June 2002, dedicates this article to Karleton, Haven, Jackson, and baby Parker, from whom she has learned much about loving and living. She also expresses her appreciation to the international students at Fuller who have defined and demonstrated global Christianity in their response to Sept. 11.



I shot this photo of a yellow Avalanche Lily on the slopes of Mt. Rainier at about 5,400 ft. These tiny, fragile flowers are only about three inches wide and bloom from delicate stems. Even so, they push up through the last winter snows and flood alpine slopes with a mass of color: a great metaphor of hope — Dr. Jeff Bjorck

Back at the Taliban Recruiting Center on Sept. 11, 2002

by J. Dudley Woodberry

On Sept. 11, 2001, my wife, Roberta, and I were at our son's home, a block from the major Taliban recruiting center in Peshawar, Pakistan. One year later, we will be back at the same place. How have we and the Muslim world changed in the intervening year?

I am writing these reflections while returning from Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, where Fuller partners with a consortium of schools in a doctoral program. During my visit, I listened each day to the divergent calls to prayer from the minarets of many different mosques. Some clashed with the noise of Western media, others competed with calls from other mosques, and some were met by the sound of prayer emanating from Christian churches. What I heard encouraged me to reflect on the competing calls of post-Sept. 11.

The Mosque and the West

Although Osama bin Laden – if not dead – has been driven into hiding and the Taliban defeated, little has been done to resolve the underlying issues that led to the tragedy of last September. In fact, some situations have grown worse. Many Muslims still believe they lost land in Palestine because of American support of Israel, lost the lives of Iraqi children because of American sanctions, lost their culture because of Western globalization, lost their economy because of Western domination of the markets, and lost their honor from the cumulative effect of it all.

Although the coalition of Western governments helped defeat the Taliban and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan, al-Qa'ida still has many supporters worldwide. By focusing our efforts on the fight against terrorism, we have failed to address basic issues of historical justice and to hear the reservations of the rest of the world concerning plans against Iraq.

The Mosque and Other Muslims

The struggle between Muslims for the soul of Islam has intensified since Sept. 11. The bombing of a Muslim nation by a non-Muslim nation and the escalating conflict in the Middle East has increased the militancy of Islamists (fundamentalists and conservatives) and strengthened their resolve to introduce Islamic Law from Nigeria to Indonesia. In turn, suicide bombings have increased the resolve of

moderates who oppose them. Expressing their views in Muslim publications such as *al-Jum'ah*, they insist on moderation as an important Islamic value. This month moderates in the Indonesian Parliament argued against the imposition of Islamic Law.

The Mosque and the Church

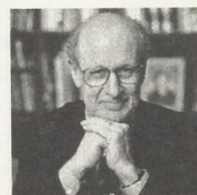
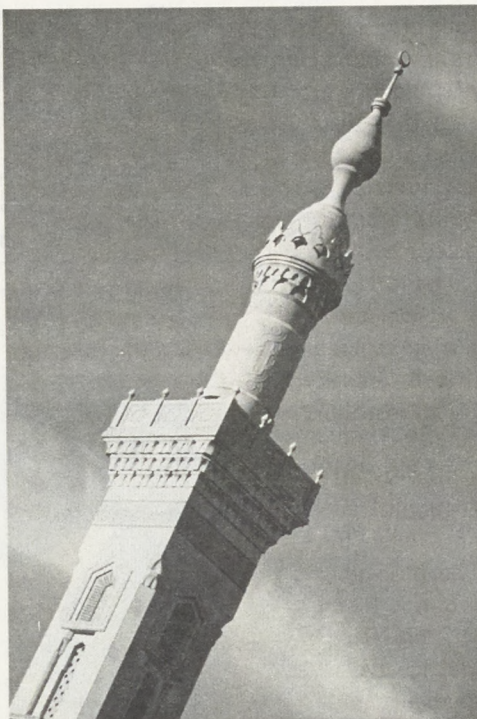
From Pasadena to Pakistan, there have been many instances of Muslims and Christians meeting together in pursuit of mutual understanding. Nonetheless, relations between Muslims and Christians have become increasingly strained since Sept. 11. Despite the historic presence of the Church in the Muslim world, Muslims today still associate the Church with the West; anti-Western sentiment, therefore, translates into anti-Christian sentiment. This animosity has been expressed by acts such as the killing of Christians in many places familiar to me and my family: the church where we worshipped in Islamabad, the school which our children attended in Murree, and the hospital that served us in Taxila. In the Islamabad incident, Fuller alum John Barstad, his wife, and their child were injured. Yet attacks on civilians have led to disillusionment within Islam and greater receptivity to the Gospel in certain areas.

In Indonesia, it is rewarding to see Fuller alums serving as leaders in their witness to Muslims. Two nights ago I spoke to a large group of Indonesians who are facilitating movement to Christ within the culture. Yesterday I finished

teaching two courses for a doctoral consortium of seminaries that is organized and taught almost exclusively by Fuller alums. Before getting on the plane today, I spoke to leaders of Indonesian churches and Christian organizations with joint ministries coordinated by a Fuller alum.

As you read this on Sept. 11, 2002, Roberta and I will be back in Peshawar. A year ago we were ministering to Christian aid workers recently expelled from Afghanistan. This Sept. 11 we will rejoin the workers in Afghanistan, where our son manages an aviation program for aid personnel. The time has arrived to help Muslims find the answer to the call that is announced from the minaret of every mosque five times a day: "Come to salvation."

Dr. Dudley Woodberry coordinates the SWM concentration in Islamic Studies and is considered one of the foremost Christian Scholars of Islam. He has lived in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, and has served as consultant on the Muslim world to President Carter, the State Dept., USAID, and other US government agencies.



Immigrant Perspective - continued from page 1

was a pain, but we didn't complain. After all, few of us lost immediate family members or had our homes covered in toxic ash.

Immigrants found themselves in an interesting position. We instantly became more patriotic but at the same time felt insecure as potential targets of investigation. We knew that our rights could be stripped from us simply for possessing certain physical features or practicing a certain religion.

I especially appreciated conversing with New York taxi drivers, who are primarily Middle Eastern or East Indian. One Egyptian driver shared with me his grief about Sept. 11, emphatically stating that Islam does not teach terrorism. Stuck in Egypt while visiting his parents, he couldn't wait

We instantly became more patriotic but at the same time felt insecure...

to return to the US. Yet as he talked, I sensed his anger about what many people were saying about the Middle East; that part of the world was important to him too. His love of both places was not political: it was a love of people, sounds, tastes, sights, and memories.

Other taxi drivers were less articulate. Several were anxious or even paranoid, like the one who was convinced police were out to get him. I have noticed a significant decline in Middle Eastern taxi drivers over this past year, perhaps because of the difficulty of picking up clients and repeatedly conversing with passengers who speak to them as if they represent the entire Middle East.

Many immigrants lived through violence in their own countries before coming here. The young Slovenian couple that lives below me remarked with irony that they left their war-torn land for New York just in time for Sept. 11. A woman from Moscow who rides the ferry with me said the post-Sept. 11 curfews evoked memories of Russia and elicited many old feelings of anxiety.

A senior center near the World Trade Center formed trauma groups for elderly Chinese, many of whom had children and grandchildren working in or near the towers. The initial wait for news had been agonizing, given that few could understand English. The subsequent anthrax scare and plane crash in the Rockaways made their unease seem endless. The circumstances reminded many of fleeing Japanese soldiers during WWII or of escaping Communists in China, when family members were separated from them or killed.

Immigrants contributed generously to the recovery efforts. An undocumented patient of mine donated \$800, small churches raised thousands of dollars, and even my Bangladeshi bagel man (who lost a number of fellow countrymen at the Top of the World Restaurant) gave

openhandedly. To demonstrate their solidarity with their adopted country, members of the senior center memorized the Pledge of Allegiance and "God Bless America." Remembering so much English was no easy feat for them, but they were convinced that the event called for extraordinary efforts.

As I reflect on this past year, I believe we need to strengthen ties between our ethnic communities, especially relationships between different religious and ethnic groups. While the US is multicultural and diverse, we are united by our hopes for a better life and our desire for a safe and welcoming environment. It is important to build bridges between all our communities. The 9/11 terrorists lived in the US, yet they seemed emotionally disconnected from Allah/God's love for humanity and from people who were different from themselves. We cannot afford the same mistake, especially with our neighbors. We all lose when we treat others as enemies when they have the potential to be friends.

Dr. Grace Wong graduated from the SOP in 1990 with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. She currently maintains a private practice, teaches, and works full-time at South Beach Psychiatric Center in New York.



White Avalanche Lily
Dr. Jeff Bjorck

Just Peacemaking in a Post-Sept. 11 World

by Glen Stassen

A year after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the US is still in a warfare mentality. Over forty billion dollars have been shifted to military spending. Federal and state funds have been shifted away from programs for education, health care, and other human needs. Many live with constant fear in the back of their minds.

US military power is unrivaled, with a budget larger than that of the next eight nations combined. Overwhelming military and economic power weakens the ability of other nations to provide checks and balances to US actions that they consider unwise or erroneous. Furthermore, the nationalism that resulted from Sept. 11 has polarized public opinion and disinclined many from questioning the drift of national policy.

As I write, the Bush administration is encouraging momentum toward war with Iraq. It has also shifted its Mideast policy, siding more with Prime Minister Sharon's military actions to suppress Palestinians and less with Palestinian demands for dignity, justice, and a viable state. Other nations express distress at US unilateralism and withdrawal from treaties. Given the circumstances, it is crucial that we decrease the resentment and anger that drives people to terrorism. Neither just war theory nor pacifism, understood simply as the absence of war, are likely to provide satisfactory answers. It is time to turn to *just peacemaking theory* for help in finding preventive initiatives.

Nonviolent Direct Action

Arab and Muslim anger over injustice toward Palestinians—injustice which is perceived to be supported by the US—causes terrorism. To break the cycle of violence, more Palestinian leaders could call for nonviolent direct action instead of terrorism. In turn, Israel could choose one city where nonviolent direct action is being organized (i.e., Bethlehem) and reward it with the self-rule that the Oslo Accords promised. Self-rule could then be expanded step-by-step, wherever nonviolent action has advocates.

Independent Initiatives or Trust-Building Measures

Peace will not come until Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories are reversed. A portion of the several billion dollars that the US gives Israel annually could be earmarked for buying settlers' homes at twice their value, provided the settlers return to Israel and invest in housing there. This would reverse economic incentives for Israel, and Palestinians would finally see momentum shifting toward reducing settlements rather than proliferating them. With such a process in progress, why push terrorism? [Politicians need political support before they take on such daring independent initiatives—a good role for faith-based groups who want to push for realistic peacemaking.]

Conflict Resolution

Iraq is another major source of anger against the US. US insistence on toppling Saddam Hussein and refusal to

consider easing economic sanctions undermine any incentive to allow inspections in hopes of a better future. Conflict resolution principles indicate that the US should offer peace if Iraq allows unhindered arms inspections followed up by ongoing monitoring.

Justice: Sustainable Economic Development, Human Rights, and Democracy

Poverty with little hope for improvement and dictatorial governments with little hope for peaceful change boost terrorist recruitment in many countries. Bush has advocated a five billion dollar increase in worldwide economic aid—a step in the right direction. The US is presently the lowest per capita donor of international economic aid of the twenty richest nations. Increased aid needs to be implemented in Afghanistan yesterday.

The US should encourage pro-democracy forces in Indonesia, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt rather than pro-military, authoritarian governments. Effective combatting of terrorism requires deeper thinking; a military response to terrorism will not be enough. Police action, yes. Preventive action, definitely yes.

Dr. Glen Stassen is Lewis Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics and author/editor of Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War (Pilgrim Press: 1998).



SEPTEMBER WAIT

You are stooped, bended, broken
Heavy skins, weighing, torn
Gashes, yet you lumber
under city's wait.
Through remains — pushing, plodding
Bleeding, gasping — you remain
For in your grasp, our life.

- Rick Bonn

*It was hearing of a fireman who emerged from the ruin
with a lame, mute woman that sparked this poem. How he
was her life, how she could never thank him, how he
returned to never return.*

Rick Bonn is the development director for Reel Spirituality.

In the Shadow of 9/11

Interview with Stephen Sesi
by Leslie Hawthorne Klingler

Does Fuller still live in the shadow of 9/11? Student Chaplain Stephen Sesi believes that most members of the Fuller community have refocused their lives around personal interests and agendas, but "deep down everyone knows that life has changed – not just for Americans but for the whole world."

Remembering the prayer meeting he led in the wake of Sept. 11, Sesi recalls that most people were overwhelmed by sorrow and unanswered questions. For many, Sesi observes, the question marks have been replaced by deep seated anger. "Before, in the name of pluralism and in order to promote dialogue, people often argued that Yahweh and Allah are the same God," he notes. "You don't hear that anymore. They say that no one who believes in Yahweh could do such a thing." Instead, he senses new suspicion and uncertainty toward Muslims. Although he recognizes most people do not equate Islam with terrorism, he feels that many "worry that Muslims are out to rule the world." He believes that all levels of society recognize the precariousness of the relationship between Muslim and Christian nations, "but no one seems to know what to do about it."

Sesi believes that Fuller has responded proactively to the new global context. He affirms students' interest in learning about Islam and Fuller's decision to offer a number of courses on the theme. However, he argues that life in the shadow of Sept. 11 calls for more from us as individuals

Fuller is the "best-placed institution to investigate the psychological base of the controversy, to probe Islam from a theological perspective, and to research the implications of Sept. 11 for missions and non-profits."

and as a seminary. He urges the community to strive to understand itself in light of the Muslim worldview. "We think everything is okay, but that is not the truth," Sesi insists. "I am not okay if what I am doing is very offensive to my Muslim neighbor. Where we think we live in peace we are not in peace."

More concretely, Sesi proposes a concerted effort involving all three schools to address the issue of Islam in the post-9/11 context. He contends that Fuller is arguably the "best-placed institution to investigate the psychological base of the controversy, to probe Islam from a theological perspective, and to research the implications of Sept. 11 for missions and non-profits." This kind of research, he reasons, would benefit both the church and the broader Western

society – which is perceived as Christian regardless of actual religious convictions and practice.

Wary of any type of military response, Sesi hopes that answers to the current impasse can be found through dialogue at the individual, institutional, and international levels. The church, he proposes, should be at the forefront of such interaction. "The church understands the value of human life," Sesi explains, "and valuing human life is the basis of real dialogue."

Biographical note:

Stephen and Josephine Sesi were studying at Fuller's Pasadena campus in August 1998, when terrorists bombed the U.S. Embassy in their home country of Kenya. Despite geographical distance from the bombing, news from relatives in Nairobi made them well aware of its physical, emotional, and economic impact. Over two hundred people were killed and nearly five thousand were injured, including a number of family friends.

When asked if the bombing continues to influence Kenyans' lives, Josephine Sesi replied that Kenyans don't just forget about things that happen: "events live with us." She believes that, like 9/11, the embassy bombing forced people to reflect on their own mortality and brought them closer to God. It also alerted people to the need to evaluate deeply entrenched patterns of relating between Muslims and Christians. "When the missionaries came," Josephine explains, "they told us not to go where Muslims had already been working. Muslim missionaries told their people not to go where the Christians were." The bombing, she says, awoke Kenyan Christians to a new mission within their own country.

Josephine and Stephen recognized a call to study Muslim cultures over twenty years ago. After God gave them a clear commission in 1996, Stephen moved to Pasadena to begin his Th.M. studies in SWM. Josephine and their three boys arrived the following year. Stephen and Josephine are currently pursuing degrees in Islamic Studies (Ph.D. and D.Miss., respectively) and are beginning their fourth year as SWM Chaplains.



	
DEAN OF STUDENTS	Ruth Vuong
MANAGING EDITOR	Carmen Valdés
EDITOR	Leslie Hawthorne Klingler semi-editor@dept.fuller.edu
PRODUCTION EDITOR	Carsten Seiler semi-ads@dept.fuller.edu